

editorial opinion

A well-deserved membership

Undergraduate Student Government President Todd Sloan recently suggested that the Lesbian / Gay Student Alliance be given membership in The Undergraduate Student Executive Council.

The council wants time to think about it. But what exactly are they thinking about when the appointment is clearly a necessary one? Misunderstanding about gays promotes discrimination and abuse at Penn State. USEC could help alleviate this problem.

A survey conducted last fall by the Lesbian and Gay Student Alliance showed that among homosexual students surveyed at the University, 72 percent had been verbally insulted, 2 percent chased or followed, 16 percent had had personal property destroyed or damaged, 25 percent had been threatened with physical violence and 6 percent had been spat on.

Clearly, discrimination toward homosexuals needs to be dealt with on a University-wide student effort.

If the Lesbian and Gay Student Alliance has the opportunity to work within USEC, the alarming rate of these abusive incidents may not be lessened, but steps will definitely be taken in that direction and students

can be educated. A seat on USEC would appropriate LGSA with the recognition and resources needed to reach all students.

However, USEC is involved in a controversy over whether LGSA is a "special interest group." If this is the case, USEC members don't believe LGSA should hold a seat. But LGSA is an organization which offers many services — its nature confirms that it is not a special interest group.

LGSA provides confidential services such as support / discussion groups, individual counseling and educational programs for students coming to terms with their own sexuality.

The alliance provides educational and awareness raising services to all students through "Gay Awareness Day," aimed at raising student awareness of the existence and concerns of the gay community here at Penn State.

With official recognition, LGSA will be better able to reach out to students and to counsel those who choose to become involved, while educating other student leaders about the concerns of the gay population at the University. The appointment is in the best interest of a minority group long ignored on this campus.

the Collegian

Tuesday, Dec. 1, 1987
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Students' letters should include semester standing, major and campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Names may be withheld on request.

reader opinion

AIDS information

In a nation with all its economic and political problems, there's still one problem that lingers in the minds of the cautious and "high risk group" people.

I'm talking about AIDS, a deadly disease that is quickly reaching epidemic proportions. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome can possibly be traced back to 1969 where it might have first appeared in the United States, but it hasn't been until the late 1970s and early 1980s that people began to realize the severity of such a disease.

AIDS can be transmitted either by blood-to-blood contact or sexual intercourse; either way it's assuredly 100 percent fatal. It has been projected that scientists won't have any type of medicine to battle this disease until the early 1990s and by then hundreds of thousands of people would either have died or have been infected by AIDS or its related maladies.

One of the most effective ways to see that people protect themselves is to educate them (especially those who fall under the "high risk group" category — homosexuals, IV drug users, etc.) about the transmission and prevention of AIDS.

For homosexuals, AIDS is transmitted by sexual intercourse, but it is not exclusively the gay population that is contracting AIDS and spreading it. AIDS has reached the heterosexual population as well.

Unfortunately, our society evolved with the notion that sex was not to be talked about outside the bedroom. Now our views must change. The fear of AIDS (not to mention the increase in teen pregnancy) has made it imperative.

To begin with, public awareness programs have to be established for those in the "high risk" groups along with more public access to medical attention and health services (including the accessibility to condoms and other preventative devices).

Along with these public facilities, educating teenagers on sex and AIDS should begin in the public schools. Educators travel from school lecturing on AIDS and its communicability, but as far as truly teaching teenagers about sex and AIDS, there should be a mandatory class for all students specifically for teaching about sex and AIDS.

It has been hotly debated whether or not such subjects should be taught in the public schools. It has been hotly debated about whether such subjects should be allowed to be taught to children in fear that it would be more detrimental than helpful and informative. But now AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases have made it so that society has no other choice.

People (especially those in the more middle income range) have had this predominantly Puritanical view of what should be dealt with publicly and in private. Sex is one of those in-private subjects. No longer. In order to deal with this problem, society as a whole must break from its old-fashioned norms and adapt itself.

And if that means more public awareness and facilities for AIDS and AIDS victims then the longer we procrastinate the worse it will be to begin a reduction in its expansion into the population.

Mark Halperin
freshman-business administration

Drug testing

There are too many problems with drug testing for it to be used by all types of employers. Fillman himself states one test is not good enough, two or three tests may be mandatory.

If one test is not accurate, who is to say that a second or third test will be? Another problem is that drug testing infringes on individual rights. I think that drug testing should only be permitted in companies that are set up for the public that deal with the public safety.

If a person is hired by a government agency which concerns public health and safety, drug testing should be permitted for one reason. This reason is the following: a person who works for the government has no true employer looking over his / her shoulder and threatening the loss of a job.

The fact is that even though many governmental organizations have a rank system, no one really cares whether he is working up to capacity. A dent in his organizations productivity will not result in a dent in his paycheck.

In this case, the public has the right to demand drug testing as a type of preventive injury program. Accidents involving train and plane crashes have occurred; the public should be able to demand assurance that if anything should fail it is not because someone on the job was drinking or smoking pot.

However, if an employer owns a private business and decides to fine an employee who is regularly tardy and not working up to capacity, that is reasonable. If an employer wants to fire an employee because he thinks the employee takes drugs, that is not reasonable.

If an employee takes drugs and this affects his performance, I believe an employer should fire him or her because of his performance, not because of drug use.

Heather Safir
junior-pre-law

For freedom

Once upon a time there was a land of science and mysticism. The people were enlightened to the laws of the physical universe as well as to the word of God. There were many beliefs amongst the citizenry, superstitions and religions handed down to them through the ages by their ancestors and the writings of wise men.

One nation of this land was recovering from the reign of a ruler who had betrayed his people by being on the wrong side of a war. The state of the nation was chaos.

The citizens of this nation looked for guidance among the traditional sources of solace — religion. Their attitudes made them very conducive to the guidance of a strong, charismatic leader. They sought a leader to follow, and they found one.

He unified the nation by creating an ideal upon which the people of the nation could look with pride — the idealized image of their nation and race. This unified the nation and made it a power with which to reckon.

In other nations of this land, the trend towards mysticism, superstition, and religion also existed, although not quite as strongly. In one nation, their emperor was revered as a god.

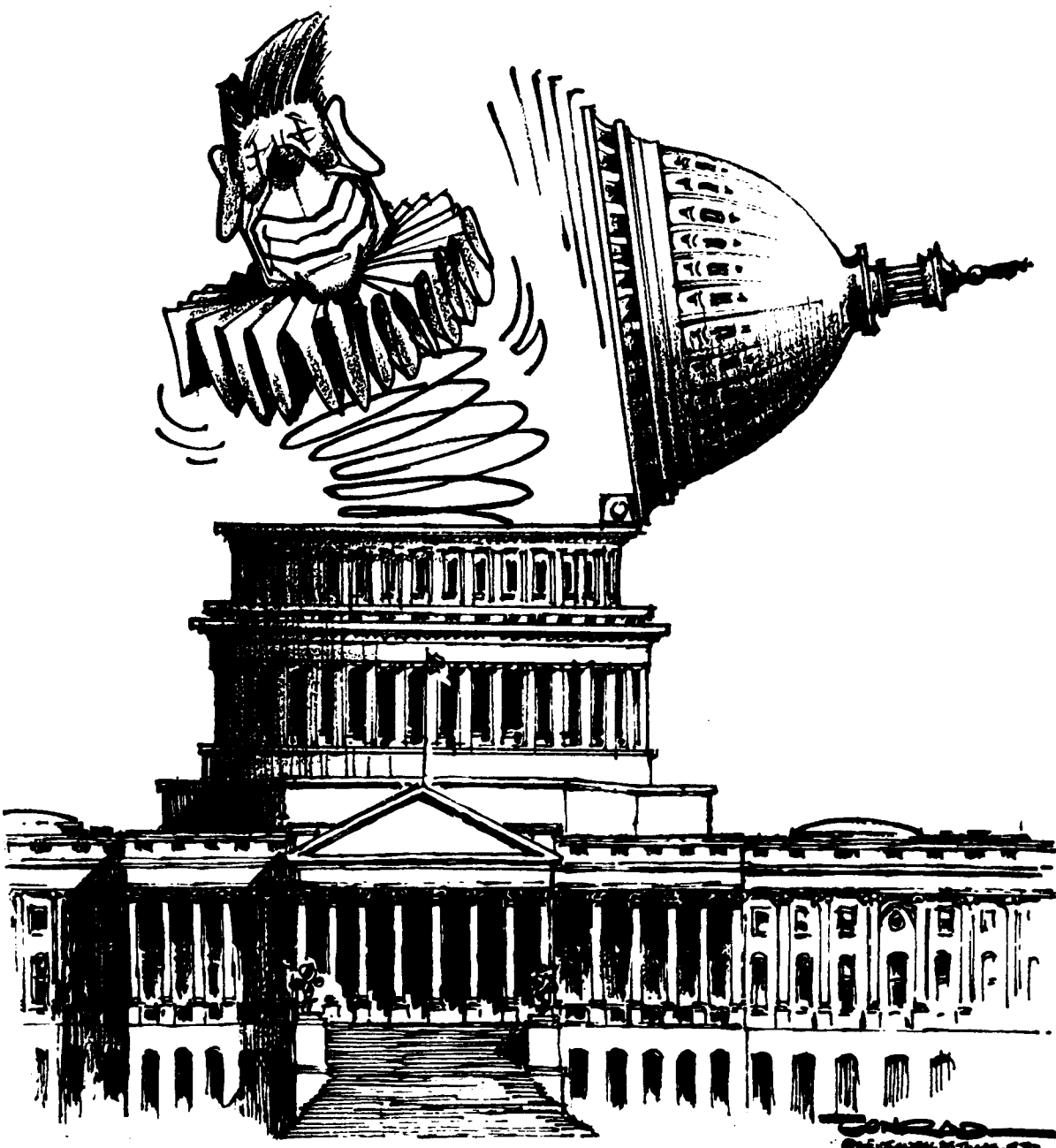
The time came when some of these nations became allies and tried to subjugate the rest of the land under their systems of belief, just as they had punished and eliminated those citizens of their own nations who had not bowed to their philosophy.

Fortunately for the rest of the nations, these nations were defeated. Freedom was once again restored to the land. But even in the bosom of freedom, the serpent of fear and fascism prepared again to bite. Within the some of the nations who had won the recent war, citizens were being punished and eliminated who were suspected of being advocates of political systems different from those of the majority.

Eventually, this wave of fear died down, but not before many lives were sacrificed. This tide of ignorance and loathing was quieted down, but not dead. And now the trend towards mysticism rises again, not in merely a few nations, but all over the land. The people of the land even more fervently seek religions and superstitions to guide them, even those whose studies are entrenched in rationalism and logic and science.

And once again, the people are waiting for a strong, charismatic leader to guide them; to what end, we will not know until he arrives. We keep our histories from which to learn. But now, it seems, "humanity" has learned nothing.

Jeffrey Hui
junior-Fine Arts



THE DEFICIT REDUCTION BOX

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Students surviving on Cliffs Notes and answer books aren't stupid — they're illiterate

It has come to our attention that the American public thinks that students are stupid. One researcher found that many students did not know that Columbus discovered America before 1750. No one knew the dates of the Civil War, World War I or World War II.

Why this boon of stupidity? Too many mind altering substances? Too many episodes of the "New Newlywed Game" and "One Million Dollar Chance of a Lifetime"? Fallout from Chernobyl? All of these are most likely contributing factors, but such explanations cannot account for society's belief that our collective minds are in the toilet.

Perhaps they realize that the problem is that our educations are surviving on a diet of Cliffs Notes and answer books.

Perhaps then stupid is not the word. More fitting is the term illiterate. Despite our fantasies of breezing through college without actually having to learn anything or ever cracking a book, man cannot live by Cliffs Notes alone.

If you want to keep in touch with the world, past and present, you have to read. If you want to have any intelligent input in a conversation, you have to read. If you want to understand how to operate the drive-up teller at your local bank, you have to read. Even if you don't want to, you still have to

read or at least own some books.

Why, you ask? Here's why.

- Makes great filler conversation at cocktail parties.
- What if that incredible blonde at a party is an English major and asks you, "So, what do you think of Sartre's concept of Existentialism?"



Susan Elberty

- If people like Victoria Principal and Vanna White have the ability to write books, we should at least have the ability to read them.

- So when you find out that your ice cream contains Polysorbate 80, you know what it is.

- Makes a good post-romance conversation.

- It saves you the \$100 fee you would pay someone to write your Thoreau paper for you.

- Books are cheaper than videos.
- Pictures.
- You can doodle in the margins.
- Can be used as kindling.
- High quality hard back pages make good paper airplanes.
- A hefty shelf-full of books will make your parents believe that they actually sent you to school for a good reason.
- So you don't forget how.
- Gives you a good excuse to go to the library and check out the opposite sex.
- Something to do in between classes.
- You'll know a little about a lot.
- You can win friends and influence people.

- Impressive at interviews.
- If your desk is wobbly you can always stick a couple of books under the leg — works better than Collegians anyway.
- So you won't be embarrassed in later life when your children know more than you do.

- Good for propping open doors and windows.
- Improves your MCAT / GSAT / GRE scores.
- Makes impressive noise when dropped in the middle of class.
- Can be sold for small change at garage sales.
- Gives you yet another reason to loathe

Penn State University Inc., who manages to sell you a book for \$30 and justifies buying it back at \$0.30.

- Reading Hemingway while walking along The Mall is much more impressive than feeding a squirrel.
- Embarrass your enemies by asking them pointed questions about obscure authors in front of their friends.



Jennifer Bortel

- Can admit you to the jetset crowd by dropping the names of the latest hip and cool New York authors: "So, did you read that new one by Tama Janowitz?"
- So that researchers will quit calling you illiterate.
- Teaches you how to remodel your kitchen, how to do high-impact aerobics, low-impact aerobics, and aerobics while nine months pregnant, how to fish, how to knit, how to have thin thighs in 30 days, how

to succeed in business without really trying, how to make love to a man, how to make love to a woman, how to make love to each other, how to make love to your dog — wait, scratch that.

We're not saying that you have to read Shakespeare and Dante (you should, but you don't have to). Read anything, we don't care. Read *Popular Mechanics*, read *Reader's Digest*, read cereal boxes, warning labels on Excedrin bottles, *Playboy*, *Penthouse* (we're talking read, and we draw the line at *Hustler*), read romances, science fiction, mysteries, math books — ANYTHING.

So what if we don't? Well, studies have shown that many students don't recognize important passages from the Constitution, and can't identify the differences between a "free" and a "non-free" country.

A society that doesn't value such distinctions isn't really much of a society. With attitudes like these, we may soon find ourselves harvesting beets in Siberia. In our present state, we'd be surprised if most people knew where Siberia was. Everyone knows it's just south of Akron, right?

Susan Elberty, senior, and Jennifer Bortel, junior, are english majors and columnists for The Daily Collegian.